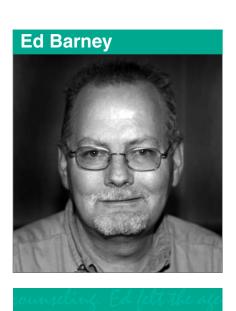
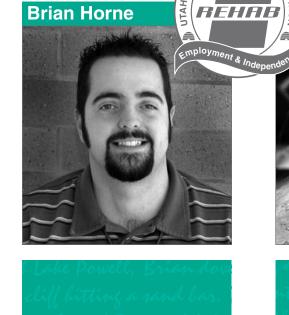
2004-05 Annual Report



Produced by the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation

250 East 500 South P.O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, UT 84114-4200









Gaylee Spencer



State Rehabilitation Council

Mission

The Mission of the State Rehabilitation Council, in partnership with the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation and in collaboration with disability groups, is to ensure quality vocational rehabilitation services for eligible individuals as they make informed choices to achieve employment.

We accomplish this mission by reviewing programs, analyzing service delivery processes, and advising on policies and procedures.

State Rehabilitation Council Members

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Krystal Gray, Chair Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor

Milton Taylor, Vice Chair Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor

Helen Post, Secretary
Representative of Parent
Training and Information
Center

Susan Loving, Past Chair Representative of State Education Agency

Eileen Glathar, Member at Large

Members

Allan Ayoub, Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor

Melanie Bike, VR Counselor

Deborah Burt, Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor

Delena Fish, Consumer, Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor

Nancy Friel, Representative of Client Assistance Program

Rollin S. Jones, Representative of Deaf or Hard of Hearing Council

Tericia Leavitt, Representative of Person With Disability

Marie Marshall, Consumer

Kent McGregor, Representative of the Services to Blind or Visually Impaired Council

Treva Roanhorse, Representative of Title 121

Eileen Saunders, Service Provider

Karl Smith, Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor

Craig Stephens, Service Provider and Consumer

Nedra Taylor, Service Provider

Rebecca Wassem, Representative of State Independent Living Council

Message From the Chair

December 2005

To the Citizens of the State of Utah:

I am amazed, as another year with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) draws to a close, how much an individual can learn and grow while giving time in a voluntary position. In September 2004, the Utah SRC gathered for the beginning of a new year, not anticipating all the changes that lay ahead.

Helen Post, the elected chairperson, kicked off the year by presenting the Council with "The Fish Philosophy." We learned about four basic principles including play, making another person's day, being there, and choosing an appropriate attitude. The development of these principles was intended to add energy and fun into the State Rehab Council, and help individual members change and improve their employment and everyday life. We also had the privilege of welcoming three new members, Delena Fish, Treva Roanhorse, and Kraig Stephens, to the Council. Treva came to fill a new position on the SRC as a representative of Title 121 of the Rehabilitation Act (The American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program). Due to her location in Arizona, she generally joined our meetings via telecom. Melanie Bike, a supervising VR

counselor, also joined the SRC later in the year, replacing Hector Cando, who had changed jobs and accepted a position outside of the VR system.

By October, another change occurred on the Council. Helen Post regretfully announced her need to step down from the position of chairperson of the SRC due to family and professional obligations. She graciously offered to remain on the Executive Committee in the position of secretary. I was asked to immediately begin my term as chairperson, rather than vice chairperson. Milt Taylor accepted the position of vice chairperson (previously secretary), Eileen Glather remained as the member-at-large, and Susan Loving remained as immediate past chairperson. As a relatively new member of the Council, with little experience on the Executive Committee, I was extremely grateful for the support of the Council as a whole as I accepted these new responsibilities and changing roles.

Blaine Petersen and Don Uchida of the USOR kept the Council abreast of changes at the federal and state levels through regular legislative updates. We heard a lot about the WIA Plus Amendment and the announcement of the closing of the regional RSA offices, and expressed our opposition with our representatives. Kris Fawson, of the Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities, helped the Council learn how to be effective citizen advocates.

The SRC reviewed and analyzed the results of the Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment and the Statewide Case Review, as presented by Russ Thelin and Elizabeth Sexton, respectively. We looked at changes in VR counselor recruitment and retention. The Council was introduced to the Utah Business Employers Team (UBET), an organization developed to help local employers change their outlook and better understand the benefits of employing people with disabilities. Our ad hoc committees were reorganized with the completion of the Consumer Satisfaction Survey. That committee dissolved, and members were reassigned to either the Collaboration and Coordination Committee (chaired by Rebecca Wassem) or the Legislative Advocacy Committee (chaired by Eileen Saunders). Kent McGregor and Allan Ayoub, both Council members, accepted the assignment to write a letter expressing the SRC's support of the ADA that was sent to local newspapers throughout the state. Changes and modifications were reviewed by the Council and



Introduction

recommendations made with regards to self-employment, Pell Grant monies, and order of selection. The list goes on and on.

As I reminisce about all the changes of the past year and look forward to the challenges of the coming year, I am reminded of a quote by Margaret Mead. She said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." The Utah State Rehabilitation Council is just such a group, and their work is resulting in significant, positive changes in the lives of people with disabilities.

Krystal Gray

Chairperson
Utah State Rehabilitation Council

The Utah State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

is a body of citizens appointed by the Utah State Board of Education, under the authority of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The Council is composed of consumers, professionals, employers, labor representatives, family and parent advocates, and service providers promoting public awareness and support of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program and advocating for individuals with disabilities. The majority of Council membership consists of individuals with disabilities, many of whom have been involved as participants in the vocational rehabilitation process. Members of the SRC have been chosen for their interest, specialized knowledge, and expertise in serving the disabled community. The term of office for selected SRC members is three years.

The Council provides direct communication among consumers; rehabilitation

professionals; business, industry, labor, and service providers; and other individuals interested in improving the services provided by the state agency. Collectively, this group reviews, analyzes, and advises the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) regarding the Vocational Rehabilitation program.

Over the years, the SRC has established strong community relationships among people with disabilities, local businesses, private and public agencies, service providers, community organizations, and advocacy groups to promote the objectives of the organization. The Council continues to be an active partner with the Vocational Rehabilitation program to ensure the provision of quality services to eligible consumers. Council members provide critical support to the USOR and to individuals with disabilities served by the agency by communicating with legislators on state and national levels. They promote legislation and funding requests that continue the

specialized services provided by the agency.

Council members participate in various functions of the VR agency. These functions include USOR Statewide Administrators Meetings (SAMs), the annual USOR agency meeting, Golden Key employee recognition awards ceremonies, town meetings, focus groups, and district VR staff meetings. The SRC has contributed to and continues to be involved in the development and implementation of the USOR's Strategic Plan and the State Plan. The Council has identified areas of strength within the USOR, acknowledged the best practices of the agency, and recommended improvements to the VR program. Members of the State Rehabilitation Council and staff of the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation agree that, through appropriate communication and partnerships, vocational rehabilitation services for people with disabilities in Utah will continue to improve.



Page 5

Purpose

Roles and Responsibilities

The SRC, in partnership with the USOR Vocational Rehabilitation program, is committed to helping the people of Utah who qualify for services to obtain better jobs—with a living wage, health care benefits, and better career opportunities and to become as independent as possible. The Council believes that individuals with disabilities should be full and active partners in the VR process. Members of the SRC seek to work cooperatively with the state VR agency to ensure that the activities of the VR program are carried out in a manner that is respectful of an individual's dignity and recognizes an individual's right to make informed choices.

The responsibilities of the SRC are outlined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended in 1998, and include the following:

- Review, analyze, and advise the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation (USOR) regarding the performance of its responsibilities, particularly those related to eligibility (including order of selection); the extent, scope, and effectiveness of services provided; and the functions of the state rehabilitation agency that affect the ability of individuals with disabilities to achieve employment outcomes.
- In partnership with the USOR, develop, agree to, and evaluate the effectiveness of the Vocational Rehabilitation program.
- Advise the USOR regarding activities authorized to be carried out, and assist in the preparation of the State Plan, amendments to the plan, applications, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations.
- Conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services and consumer satisfaction.
- Prepare and submit an annual report to the Utah State Board of Education and the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) on the status of vocational rehabilitation in the state, and make the report available to the public.
- Coordinate the work of the Council with the activities of other disability-related councils within the state.
- Establish working relationships between Vocational Rehabilitation, the Statewide Independent Living Council, the special education advisory panel established under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the State Developmental Disabilities Council, and the State Workforce Services Council.
- Perform other functions that the SRC determines are appropriate and comparable to other functions performed by the Council.



SRC Strategic Plan

A strategic plan was developed for the SRC to identify specific needs to focus the work of the Council. Three areas were agreed upon: collaboration (with other agencies), legislative advocacy, and SRC Annual Report/PR. Objectives and action plans were then developed. More information about the plan is provided later in this report.

Council Member Visits

SRC members visited local VR offices and attended statewide administrative meetings. The purposes of these visits was to become more familiar with the operation of various district offices where meetings were hosted and to raise awareness of agency management issues. These meetings also offered an opportunity for SRC members, VR staff, and supervisory members to interact and become more familiar with each other, enhancing relationships.

Legislative Issues

During the 2005 state legislative session, minimal funding was obtained in response to the USOR request to increase services and reduce caseload size. The Council has closely followed the process of reauthorization of the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA). USOR administrators provided valuable information that helped Council members determine actions to be taken to respond to areas of concern in the proposed legislation. Information was shared about the potential impact on the VR program and individuals with disabilities in Utah. Strategies to inform members of the State Board of Education about VR and the continuing need to support the USOR have been discussed and will need to be implemented.

Order of Selection

The Rehabilitation Act as amended requires states to determine annually whether they can provide the necessary VR services to all eligible individuals in the state. Although the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation has an approved order of selection in place that would assure that VR services would be provided to those individuals with the most significant disabilities first, implementation has not yet been necessary. However, many factors will continue to increase the numbers of consumers seeking VR services from the state.

Despite current satisfaction among program participants, despite the state's history of innovative programs, and despite careful program management, the

State Rehabilitation Council knows that the increasing demand for VR services will challenge the capacity of the VR program's existing financial resources. The state legislature has provided funds and approval for additional counseling staff to be added to the VR program to address several issues, which has reconciled the immediate need for an order of selection. The USOR presented its order of selection policy to the SRC for review and recommendations. The policy will be revised and reviewed in early FY06 for final comment and the vote on approval.

Needs Assessment Follow-up

Last year it was decided that town meetings would be combined with the needs assessment focus group meetings required for the State Plan. The major issues identified last year included:

- 1. The need to assure manageable caseloads.
- 2. The need to assure quality staff.
- 3. The need to assure quality service provision.
- 4. The need to assure quality communication.
- 5. The need to assure professional development.

Page 6 Page 7

The major focus of SRC activities this year was to help meet these assurances. This focus is reflected in the "USOR State Plan" section below.

USOR State Plan

The Rehabilitation Act and its regulations require the development of the State Plan to outline how the state will comply with and implement the provisions of the law. The USOR meets with the SRC regularly to review and analyze program data.

The following summaries cover USOR responses to seven SRC recommendations to the USOR. These are also addressed in State Plan Attachment 4.2 (c).

- 1. The SRC requested that members be allowed to participate in the USOR internal annual statewide case file review training. The USOR supported this involvement and continued to invite Council members to participate.
- 2. The Council continued to provide recommendation for additional caseloads in order to reduce caseload size. The USOR fully supported this recommendation. Two new transition caseloads were added in FY05 with state funding.
- 3. The Council supported the USOR's efforts last year in implementing a recruitment and retention plan to hire and retain quality staff. The Council requested updates on

- plan implementation and effectiveness. The USOR implemented the plan in FY04, and will provide the Council with information on the effectiveness of the plan when information becomes available.
- 4. The Council provided input in support of ongoing development of informed choice for VR clients receiving services. The Council recommended that informed choice be further developed throughout the rehabilitation process. With the orientation process completed, the USOR emphasized informed choice in random case file reviews, the state's annual case file review exercise, and its results. Findings were included in the report of these activities. Training was developed and presented to all agency counseling staff in early 2005.
- 5. The Council recommended ongoing cross-training and other activities between the USOR and school district transition staff. USOR strongly supported this recommendation. The USOR and the Utah State Office of Education conducted a Transition Conference in April 2005. Transition is addressed in the agency Basic Counselor Orientation and Training program for new staff, and is developed on the local level with VR counselors and each school district in Utah.
- 6. The Council recommended that the USOR study natural and other supports to develop policies, procedures, and long-term funding resources needed for successful Supported Employment (SE) outcomes. The USOR partnered with the Division of Services to People with Disabilities (DSPD) to conduct a study. The results will be used to establish a strategic plan to address goals for long-term funding of SE. An SE Revitalization Pilot Project has also been developed between the USOR and DSPD.
- 7. The Council recommended that the USOR present self-employment policies and procedures. The Council made a number of recommendations pertaining to self-employment. The USOR has revised the self-employment policy based in part on input from the SRC, and has trained VR staff on the new policy.
- 8. The Council recommended that the USOR provide education on agency legislative funding requests. The USOR presented its funding requests and explained the need for each request. The USOR also helped coordinate with advocacy organizations to train the Council on advocacy strategies.

RSA BI-REGIONAL TRAINING CONFERENCE

The RSA sponsored a bi-regional (VI and VIII) training conference in Dallas in August 2005. The training was conducted by staff from the University of Northern Colorado and University of Arkansas Rehabilitation Continuing Education Programs (RCEP). Two members of the Utah SRC Executive Committee and a USOR staff member attended this conference. The conference title, "State Rehabilitation Councils in

Partnership With State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies," was reflected in many of the training sessions. The Utah participants learned strategies for effective partnership. The experience also increased the understanding and appreciation of the fact that Utah already has a very effective partnership.

SRC Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the SRC focused on the orientation of new members and the development of action steps for the Council's annual goals, as outlined in the Strategic Plan. The theme for the meeting was "The Fish Philosophy." A member of the Executive Committee provided the training. The purpose of the training was to help the new members understand the Council's mission, their own roles and responsibilities, and the importance of getting involved and committing to an active role in helping to achieve the SRC's goals.

Committees and Accomplishments

Several ad hoc committees were formed this year to accomplish the work of the Council. Committees included the Nominating Committee, Collaboration and Coordination Committee, and Legislative Advocacy Committee. Committee members selected chairpersons.

- Nominating Committee: Resignations and the expiration of terms for several members created openings on the Council. Some members chose to be nominated to serve a second term. There were several vacancies that needed to be filled as outlined in the Rehabilitation Act. The full Council formed a Nominating Committee to solicit nominations, review the qualifications of nominees, conduct interviews, and present the names of the individuals for consideration. The committee submitted the names to the State Board of Education in accordance with specified timelines. Highly qualified and committed individuals were appointed to the Council. They bring commitment and unique expertise to the SRC.
- ▶ Collaboration and Coordination Committee: The intent of this new committee was to assess the current status of collaboration and coordination and to increase these efforts where needed. Overall, the Utah SRC appears to be doing excellent work in this area when compared to other states in RSA Regions VI and VIII. A representative from the SRC will attend meetings of the Utah Transit Authority (UTA) as needed to address the transportation needs of people with disabilities and employment.
- ▶ Legislative Advocacy Committee: Advocacy on behalf of consumers of VR services continued to be a high priority for the Council. SRC members participated in various ways to promote the state VR program. Funding issues were addressed and contacts were made

related to proposed legislation language that affects the provision of VR services.

CSAVR Meeting, Washington, D.C.

By invitation, the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) recommends that the chair or vice chair of the SRC attend training at the CSAVR's spring meeting. If finances are available, then a representative of the SRC accompanies USOR/CSAVR administrative staff members to the Washington, D.C. meeting. Krystal Gray, SRC chair, attended the CSAVR meeting in April. She also met with SRC members from other states. She was impressed by Utah's successful working relationship between the SRC and the USOR, and gained an increased understanding of the role of the SRC. Krystal joined USOR staff in meeting with the Utah congressional delegation and their staff regarding VR issues.

Page 8 Page 9

SRC Strategic Planning

Throughout the year, the Council developed a strategic plan to be implemented during the coming year. This planning process was determined to be necessary to help the SRC identify priorities and focus its efforts on accomplishing its mission and fulfilling responsibilities outlined in the federal regulations and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1998. Goal areas were determined. Committees were formed to develop and prioritize objectives and activities. Timelines are also being developed.

Goal areas to be addressed during the coming year are:

- Collaboration with other agencies.
- Legislative advocacy.
- ► SRC annual report/PR.

Last year's accomplishments in these three goal areas are detailed in the following reports from the chairperson of each committee.

Collaboration/Coordination Committee Chairperson: Rebecca Wassem

The goal of this committee is to collaborate with other disability groups to resolve common issues resulting in quality VR services to eligible individuals. After reviewing the disability councils/committees represented on the SRC, it was determined that the primary focus of collaboration would be with federally and locally mandated partners, such as the Utah Statewide Independent Living Council, the Utah Parent Center, the Division of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired Advisory Council, and others listed in the SRC Bylaws. It was agreed that any collaboration with the mandated groups would be directly related to employment, provision of VR services and issues related to VR services. It was suggested that an SRC member who also represented one of the mandated partners could serve as the liaison between the SRC and the partner council.

The Collaboration Committee met twice in the FY05 fiscal year. The first meeting explored additional agencies for inclusion on the Council. We contacted the Utah Transit Authority (UTA). It was decided that we would send a representative to their monthly meetings when disability issues need our attention.

Our second meeting focused on determining how our level of collaborative representation compared with other states. We proposed a national survey. However, when we presented this idea to the Council as a whole, we discovered that Council representatives would be attending a bi-regional meeting (regions VI and VIII) of state SRCs the following week. The incoming council chair, Milton Taylor, offered to collect this data for us. He reported at the following SRC meeting that our Council has for the most part greater collaborative representation than most of the other states that were represented at the meeting. We will continue to monitor the need for the inclusion of more agencies.

Legislative Advocacy Committee

Chairperson: Eileen Saunders

During the past year the State Rehabilitation Council has worked with the USOR on issues pertinent to the progress and success of the Vocational Rehabilitation program. Linda Smith aided the Council with structure and information on how to better communicate and come to know our legislators. Kris Fawson of the Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities (LCPD) provided training on how their program aids individuals with disabilities through legislative advocacy.

Meetings were held to aid the function of the Legislative Committee, and information was shared with the Council as a whole. Milton Taylor, SRC Vice Chair, attended a conference in Washington, D.C. on legislation. As a result personal stories were written, and local, state and national political officials were contacted. Various members of the Council met and became acquainted with political officials. These politicians became aware of our concerns for people with disabilities, as hope was communicated for future progress of the program. Some of the topics were transportation, Medicaid, and assistive technology (AT) in the workplace. The Council worked with the USOR in introducing legislative "Building Block" requests necessary for continued success of the program. There were concerns expressed for WIA Plus. Questions were asked in regards to funding for future benefit and growth of the Vocational Rehabilitation. Concerns were expressed about funding being withdrawn from an already successful program. Legislative sessions were attended at the Capitol, where Building Block Requests were made for structure and funding for the Transition Program, DSDHH, Independent Living, Benefits Planning and DSBVI, along with the one-time funding for AT. This year funding was not put in place, which will be a concern for us in the future.

SRC Annual Report Executive Committee Chairperson: Krystal Gray

The Executive Committee was responsible for providing direction to the committee chairpersons about the information that is required for the SRC's annual report. They then collect the information and prepare the content of the report. The committee was assisted in this effort by VR staff members assigned to support the Council and the administration of the USOR.

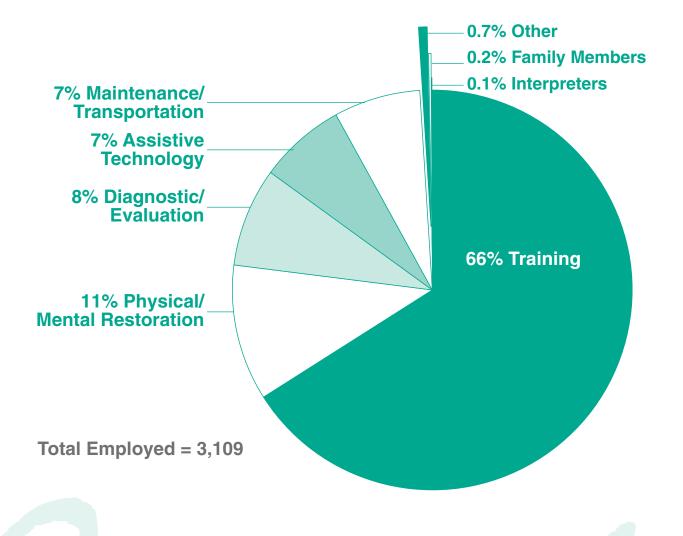
Program Data, Outcomes, and Success Stories

The following pages cover expenditures, demographics, the number of individuals served, economic impact, occupations, major disabling conditions, and several examples of successful people.

Page 10 Page 1

Expenditures of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program

This chart shows the percentage of case service funds utilized for services that assisted people with disabilities in preparing for and obtaining employment.



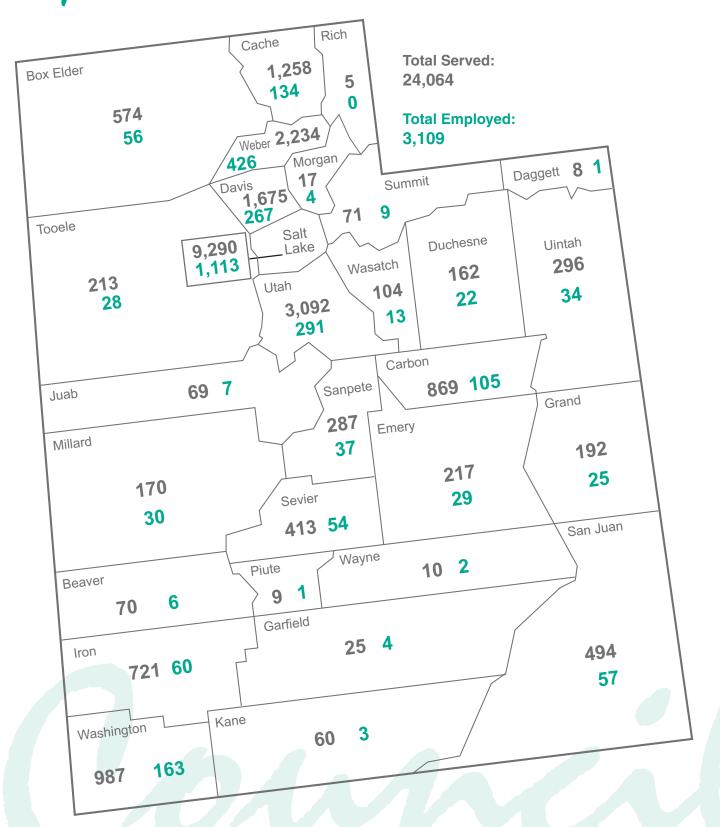
Highlights of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program

The following information demonstrates the individual and program success Vocational Rehabilitation achieved during 2005:

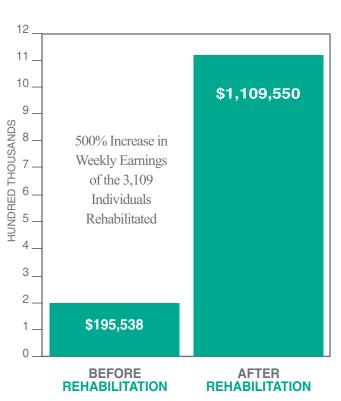
- ▶ 3,109 individuals with disabilities were successfully employed.
- ▶ 24,064 individuals were provided with vocational rehabilitation services.
- ▶ 95 percent of those employed were severely disabled.
- ▶ 251 public assistance recipients were successfully employed.
- ▶ **758** Social Security Disability Insurance recipients were successfully employed.
- ▶ 72 individuals were successfully employed through supported employment services.
- ▶ \$11,539,320 in estimated annual taxes were paid by 2,817 employed individuals after vocational rehabilitation services were provided.

Page 13

mpact of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program







Characteristics

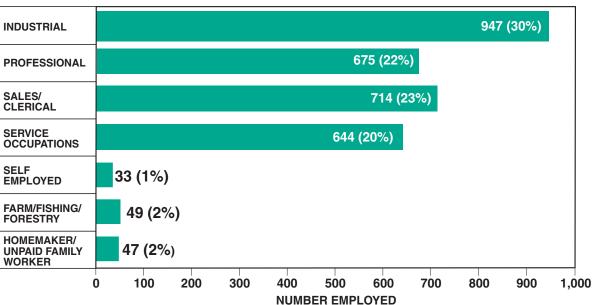
of the 3,109 individuals employed through the Vocational Rehabilitation program

GENDER	Number	Percent
Male	1,702	55%
Female	1,407	45%
Total	3,109	100%
ETHNIC BACKGROUND		
White	2,681	86.0%
African American	58	1.9%
Asian	14	0.5%
Hispanic	16	0.5%
Native American	51	1.6%
Pacific Islander	17	0.5%
Multiple Ethnicity	272	9.0%
Total	3,109	100%

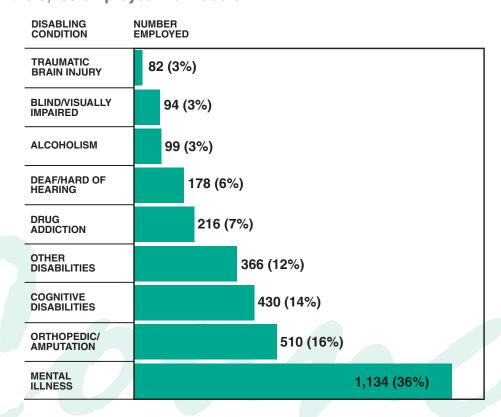
MARITAL STATUS	Number	Percent
Married	927	30%
Widowed	44	1%
Divorced	697	22%
Separated	208	7%
Never Married	1,233	40%
Total	3,109	100%
AGE AT REFERRAL		
Less than 20 years	24	0.5%
20 through 34	1,449	47%
35 through 44	735	24%
45 through 64	860	28%
65 and over	41	0.5%
Total	3,109	100%

Occupations of the 3,109 individuals rehabilitated





Major Disabling Conditions of the 3,109 employed individuals



Successful People





Ed Barney

Ed is still setting future goals, as he now has a great outlook on life and sees his family progressing. After an accident, feeling he was starting over from nothing and could not see a future, Ed, along with his family, received multi-agency services with life skills training, resume writing, job interviewing skills, a special brace for his arm and hand, academic classes, and counseling. Ed felt the agencies were "cheerleaders" giving him the confidence to set goals for himself and his family. After successfully obtaining employment as a research associate for PGM Inc., Ed is grateful for all the services received from these partnering agencies. He said, "I would not be here today and employed without the services provided."

Brian Horne

While on a high school graduation trip with his friends at Lake Powell, Brian dove off a cliff, hitting a sand bar. The injury changed Brian's life forever as he rehabilitated at the University Medical Center with C-6 level quadriplegia. That never stopped Brian from pursuing his dreams of becoming a mechanical engineer, getting married, and having a family. Brian achieved his dreams in part through the services of the Vocational Rehabilitation program. The program provided a van lift as well as tuition and books to complete his education at the University of Utah. He is now employed at L3 Communications and is supporting his wife and two children. Brian says that without the services of the Vocational Rehabilitation program, he would not be as stable and successful as he is today.

Page 16

Successful People

Gaylee Spencer

While she was working as a certified nursing assistant, one lift of a patient changed Gaylee's career path. Four herniations in her back brought Gaylee to the realization that she had to change jobs. She sought Vocational Rehabilitation services, which resulted in her employment as the Administrative Coordinator of the computer department at Best Friends Animal Sanctuary. This employment was obtained by completing two years of schooling, and through counseling and guidance from her rehabilitation counselor. Gaylee is now in a job that accomodates her back problems, with a great employer and location.



Meeting Schedule 2006 State Rehabilitation Council Year

Full Council Meeting—9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.:

(Last Wednesday of each month)

January 25, 2006

February 22, 2006

March 29, 2006

April 26, 2006

May 31, 2006

(Either June or July will be canceled)

July 26, 2006

August 30, 2006

September 26 and 27, 2006 (Annual Meeting)

October 25, 2006

November 29, 2006

No meeting in December

Individual committees may meet following the full Council meeting.

Location of SRC Meetings:

Utah State Office of Education Board Room 250 East 500 South Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

For further information, phone: (801) 538-7530 or 1-800-473-7530



